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5 December 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: C/PRD

SUBJECT: Review of Daily Production on the Middle East, November 1974

1. There was heavy coverage of Middle Eastern developments during November. The NIB averaged 1.3 items per day, the NID and DIN averages were each about 2 a day. There were two long feature articles in the NID, on Arafat and the Palestinians, respectively, keyed to the PLO appearance at the UN. Several daily items racking up the political and military indicators bearing on possible hostilities between Israel and her Arab neighbors ^{each} covered the equivalent of 3 - 4 pages ^{each} of the NIB.

2. Given the stepped-up pace of events in the Middle East during November, and the very real concern at the top echelons of the Community and the policy-making bodies, it is difficult to downgrade the current intelligence items in this area to filler or even marginal status. Over-coverage was not an issue this month in this area.

3. Moreover, even the redundancy of the NIB compared to the NID did not seem as bothersome as in other areas. Indeed at one stage the editors of the NIB made a mildly interesting point by shifting the heretofore daily Middle East lead item from 1st to 3rd place in the NIB and thereby not running any article for a day. It reinforced the Community's analytical judgment that Arab-Israeli tensions were abating.

4. Compared to some other parts of the world, the Middle East problem seemed to show the larger number of individual items based on several intelligence sources. For that reason the listing of principal source per item is not particularly meaningful. What is worth stressing is this reviewer's general impression that the source "mix" was skillful, and the analysis based on it was invariably judicious and restrained. And on the issue of war or peace just about every article communicated the distinct impression that some key element needed to light the fuze was missing (e.g., the lack the full Israeli or prolonged Egyptian mobilization, the lack of other Arab countries' support for Syrian ending of the UN observer mandate). On this point, alone, Community probably deserves some sort of recognition for refusing to cry wolf.

5. PRD has been collectively reaching the conclusion that the NID is superior to the NIB and DIN; but in its Middle Eastern coverage this month there was also an outstanding example of apparent superiority over the Intelligence Memorandum and Intelligence Report.

had been issued as a special report, and then was published in substantially identical form in the 11 November NID under

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